AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

- 1. (previously presented): A melt-blown, non-woven fabric having an average fiber diameter of 10 μ m or less comprising polyarylene sulfide having a branched structure and a non-Newtonian coefficient of 1.05-1.20.
 - 2. (canceled).
 - 3. (canceled).
 - 4. (canceled).
 - 5. (canceled).
- 6. (previously presented): The melt-blown, non-woven fabric having an average fiber diameter of 10 μ m or less according to claim 1, wherein said polyarylene sulfide is a reaction product of an alkaline metal sulfide, a dihaloaromatic compound and a polyhaloaromatic compound having 3 or more halogen substituents in one molecule, wherein 0.01-0.3 mol %, based on 100 mol % of said alkaline metal sulfide, of said polyhaloaromatic compound is added in a reaction to form the reaction product.
 - 7. (canceled).

- 8. (previously presented): The melt-blown, non-woven fabric having an average fiber diameter of 10 μ m or less according to claim 18, wherein said polyarylene sulfide is subjected to a thermal oxidation cross-linking treatment.
 - 9. (canceled).
- 10. (original): The melt-blown, non-woven fabric according to claim 8, wherein said thermal oxidation cross-linking treatment is carried out at 160-260°C for 1-120 hours.
- 11. (withdrawn): A method for producing a melt-blown, non-woven fabric constituted by polyarylene sulfide fibers, comprising the steps of:
 - (a) melt-kneading polyarylene sulfide having a non-Newtonian coefficient of 1.05-1.20;
 - (b) extruding the melt-kneaded polyarylene sulfide through nozzles at 300-360°C and drawing the resultant polyarylene sulfide extrudate with a hot gas stream at 300-360°C to form extremely fine polyarylene sulfide fibers having an average diameter of 10 μ m or less; and
 - (c) depositing said extremely fine polyarylene sulfide fibers on a collector.
- 12. (withdrawn): The method for producing a melt-blown, non-woven fabric according to claim 11, wherein said polyarylene sulfide is synthesized by a reaction of an alkaline metal sulfide, a dihaloaromatic compound and a polyhaloaromatic compound having 3 or more halogen substituents in one molecule.

- 13. (withdrawn): The method for producing a melt-blown, non-woven fabric according to claim 12, wherein 0.001-0.6 mol%, based on 100 mol% of said alkaline metal sulfide, of said polyhaloaromatic compound is added in said reaction.
- 14. (withdrawn): The method for producing a melt-blown, non-woven fabric according to claim 11, wherein said polyarylene sulfide is subjected to a thermal oxidation cross-linking treatment before melt-kneading.
- 15. (withdrawn): The method for producing a melt-blown, non-woven fabric according to claim 12, wherein said polyarylene sulfide is subjected to a thermal oxidation cross-linking treatment before melt-kneading.
- 16. (withdrawn): The method for producing a melt-blown, non-woven fabric according to claim 14, wherein said thermal oxidation cross-linking treatment is carried out at 160-260°C for 1-120 hours.
- 17. (withdrawn): The method for producing a melt-blown, non-woven fabric according to claim 15, wherein said thermal oxidation cross-linking treatment is carried out at 160-260°C for 1-120 hours.
- 18. (previously presented): A melt-blown, non-woven fabric having an average fiber diameter of 10 μ m or less comprising polyarylene sulfide having a cross-linked structure and a non-Newtonian coefficient of 1.05-1.20.
 - 19. (canceled).

- 20. (canceled).
- 21. (currently amended): The melt-blown, non-woven fabric having an average fiber diameter of 10 μ m or less according to claim 1, which has a non-Newtonian coefficient of 1.06-1.19.
- 22. (previously presented): The melt-blow, non-woven fabric having an average fiber diameter of 10 μ m or less according to claim 1, wherein said polyarylene sulfide has a melt viscosity V₆ of from 295 to 400 poise, a non-Newtonian coefficient of 1.06-1.19 and an average fiber diameter in μ m of from 5.7 to 9.5 μ m.
- 23. (new): The melt-blow, non-woven fabric according to claim 1, wherein said polyarylene sulfide is a homopolymer.
- 24. (new): The melt-blow, non-woven fabric according to claim 1, wherein said polyarylene sulfide is a copolymer compound of 70 mol% or more of an arylene sulfide repeating unit represented by the formula

based on all repeating units in the polyarylene sulfide copolymer.